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ABSTRACT

With the assistance of a grant from the Council on Library Resources, and funding and guidance from the Western Council of State Librarians, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's (WICHE) Continuing Education and Library Resources Program undertook an action research project to design and implement an interstate bibliographic network in the 17 westernmost states and the Canadian province of British Columbia. In the course of the project, it was determined that existing organizations were capable of providing operational support for networking, but that no group other than the Western Council was in a position to coordinate state and multistate research, analysis, plans, policies, and continuing education for library resource sharing. The WICHE library program was therefore renamed the Western Interstate Library Coordinating Organization (WILCO) and was redirected to offer a forum for investigating regional library concerns, to catalyze and facilitate interstate resource sharing, and to coordinate regional interests with national library network planning. This report concentrates on the most significant events of the year-long project. (Author)

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THE FOUNDING OF THE WESTERN INTERSTATE LIBRARY COORDINATING ORGANIZATION: A NARRATIVE FINAL REPORT ON THE PROJECT "INITIATING THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A WESTERN INTERSTATE BIBLIOGRAPHIC NETWORK"

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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CLR Grant 614

30 September 1976

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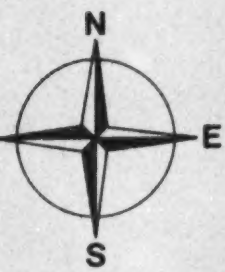
WILCO

Western Interstate Library Coordinating Organization



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ABSTRACT

With the assistance of a grant from the Council on Library Resources, and funding and guidance from the Western Council of State Librarians, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's (WICHE) Continuing Education and Library Resources Program undertook an action research project to design and implement an interstate bibliographic network in the 17 westernmost states and the Canadian province of British Columbia. In the course of the project, it was determined that existing organizations were capable of providing operational support for networking, but that no group other than the Western Council was in a position to coordinate state and multistate research, analysis, plans, policies, and continuing education for library resource sharing. The WICHE library program was therefore renamed the Western Interstate Library Coordinating Organization (WILCO) and was redirected to offer a forum for investigating regional library concerns, to catalyze and facilitate interstate resource sharing, and to coordinate regional interests with national library network planning. This report concentrates on the most significant events of the year-long project; more detailed summaries of project activities are contained in four Quarterly Reports.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The work reported herein would not have been possible without the financial support of the Council on Library Resources, Inc. and the State Library agencies in Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington. Additionally, activity on the Cost and Funding Study mentioned in this report was supported in whole or in part by the U. S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred. The efforts of a number of librarians and other interested persons, in the West and elsewhere, in helping to develop the concepts for a western bibliographic network and in helping to write or review the proposals submitted by WICHE to CLR and USOE are gratefully acknowledged. The participation of members of the Steering Committee and particularly its Executive Board (Vincent Anderson, Gerald Rudolph, Roderick Swartz, David Weber), and representatives of utilities and service centers (Lura Currier, James Kennedy, Gerald Newton, H. Paul Schrank, Donald Simpson, Earle Thompson), in several lengthy meetings to discuss coordination of networking in the West has been most helpful, and has been sincerely appreciated by the Project staff. Kevin Bunnell, WICHE General Regional Program Director, provided both professional and psychological assistance to project staff when most needed. Project secretaries, Louise Martin, Sue Middleton, and Mary Haenselman accomplished prodigious amounts of work with unfailing good humor. The contribution of Maryann Duggan, former WICHE Continuing Education and Library Resources Program Director, as a sparkplug for coalescing western librarians to support seeking and initiating the networking project was invaluable; but for her unstinting effort and enthusiasm, there would be no WILCO.

FOREWORD

In preparing this final report, the authors have attempted to assume an unbiased, historical, perspective. It is, of course, impossible for us to be unbiased because we have lived too close to the project. Eleanor Montague participated in the initial meeting and preparation of the proposal, as a representative of BALLOTS; she joined the WICHE staff as Project Director in December 1975. Karl Pearson joined the staff in September 1975, having had no previous contact with the western network idea before the previous month. Neither of us can adequately represent the views of the many other people who contributed to the project's formulation or assisted in its performance. We have frequently offered the parable of the blind men and the elephant to underline the fact that each person viewing the project is likely to come away with a different idea of its objectives and accomplishments. What is offered in this narrative is therefore only our personal perceptions of the events of the past year that led to the establishment and beginning operations of this organization named WILCO.

Although admitting to bias, we firmly assert that any particular evidence of such bias is totally unintended on our part. We apologize for any misinterpretation we may have placed on the words or motives of others. For errors of fact or ommission in this report, we are solely responsible.

Notwithstanding the foregoing apologia, we are convinced that the results of the project are an important contribution to the development of library interdependence and mutual support that has been accelerated in this decade by the rapid evolution of technology, rising costs for materials and staff, increased demand for information services, and a growing determination among librarians to turn the spirit of cooperation into accomplished means for resource sharing.

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EAM

THE FOUNDING OF THE WESTERN INTERSTATE LIBRARY COORDINATING ORGANIZATION: A NARRATIVE FINAL REPORT ON THE PROJECT "DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A WESTERN INTERSTATE BIBLIOGRAPHIC NETWORK"

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NOTE

This document, in combination with the Fourth (Final) Quarterly Report, April-August 1976, Initiating the Design and Development of a Western Interstate Bibliographic Network, represents the final report submitted to the Council on Library Resources for CLR Grant 614. The "Narrative Final Report" is intended for a general audience having an interest in the project, while the "Fourth (Final) Quarterly Report" contains a more detailed record of events, publications, and expenditures for the last quarter and is likely to be of interest primarily to the project sponsors.

GLOSSARY AND DEFINITIONS

AMIGOS Bibliographic Council - A bibliographic service center (network) operating in the Southwest. AMIGOS is headquartered at Richardson, Texas, and is a successor to the Texas Interuniversity Council/ OCLC network project. Libraries in Arizona and New Mexico are served by AMIGOS.

BALLOTS - Bibliographic Automation of Large Library Operations using a Time-sharing System. This system, initially developed at Stanford University, began daily on-line operation in November 1972 for Stanford libraries. Cataloging and catalog file search services provided by BALLOTS are now available to other libraries in the West and elsewhere.

BCR - Bibliographical Center for Research, Rocky Mountain Region, Inc., Denver, Colorado. Formerly known as the Rocky Mountain Bibliographic Center, BCR brokers on-line cataloging and search services, provides location information for interlibrary loan, develops communication nets for member libraries, and performs special research projects.

Bibliographic utility - An organization offering computer-based support for technical and public service operations to a number of libraries.

CCLN - Council of Computerized Library Networks, an association of managers of non-commercial bibliographic utilities and service centers.

CLASS - California Library Authority for Systems and Services, based on a joint exercise of powers agreement with signatories from six groups: the State Library, University of California, California State University and Colleges (not signed yet), county libraries, city libraries, and community colleges. CLASS is currently in the process of organization; it is expected to operate as a service center and coordinating organization for the state of California

CLR - Council on Library Resources, Inc. A foundation devoted to furthering the improvement of library service.

CONSER Project - A project partially funded by the Council on Library Resources to expedite the creation of machine-readable records for serial titles. It is a joint activity involving the Library of Congress, the University of Minnesota, the Ohio College Library Center, and several other major libraries. Eventually, CONSER will be operated by the Library of Congress.

Coordinating organization - A library coordinating organization has responsibility for addressing the larger issues of multi-library information service and facilitating regional library resource sharing. The objective of coordination is to catalyze the development of management techniques and policies that allow librarians to take most advantage of the capabilities offered by bibliographic utilities and service centers.

CSLUC - California State Library Union Catalog, Sacramento, California.

LC - Library of Congress.

MIDLNET - Midwest Region Library Network, a regional organization covering several states and a neighbor of the West. MIDLNET is still in the process of formation, with specific services and products to be determined.

NCHEMS - The mission of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems at WICHE is to develop compatible management information systems for postsecondary education and to promote their use in institutions and agencies throughout the United States. The ultimately successful NCHEMS effort will provide improved information to postsecondary education administration at all levels, facilitate exchange of comparable data among institutions, and expedite reporting of comparable information at the state and national levels.

NCLIS - The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, appointed by the President of the United States for the study and planning of improved library and information services in the nation.

NEBHE - New England Board of Higher Education, based on an interstate compact among the New England states, undertakes cooperative and coordinative activities in the field of education in that region of the country.

NELINET - The New England Library Information Network, a non-profit organization operated by the New England Board of Higher Education and designed to serve the libraries in six states.

OCLC - Ohio College Library Center, a non-profit corporation chartered in the state of Ohio to provide on-line computer cataloging support for libraries using remote terminals linked to the central computer system in Columbus, Ohio. OCLC services to individual libraries are usually managed by regional service centers or networks.

PNBC - The Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center, located at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. PNBC maintains a file of the holdings of 47 northwestern libraries and provides location service to libraries requesting an interlibrary loan.

Service center - An organization assisting library resources sharing by acting as a distributor or broker of computer-based services from one or more bibliographic utilities in a particular region, or the operator of other bibliographic services such as maintaining a union file of location information or a photocopy center.

Western Council - The group of State Librarians in the West that currently fund and direct the Western Interstate Library Coordinating Organization (WILCO), in behalf of all libraries in their states. Currently there are ten members: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington.

Western States - Refers to the 13 states in the WICHE compact plus the 4 states to the east (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas) and western provinces of Canada.

WICHE - Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, a non-profit organization created by an interstate compact of 13 states in 1953. It is dedicated to cooperative improvement of higher education throughout these 13 western states by the sharing of resources and expertise in that multi-state region. The basic program (student exchange across state lines) is funded by state legislatures. Other programs are individually funded through grants or contracts.

WILCO - The Western Interstate Library Coordinating Organization consists of the Western Council of State Librarians, advisors, and a small staff housed at WICHE. WILCO provides a forum and a catalyst for coordinating and facilitating library resource sharing activities among the western states and Canadian provinces.

WLN - Washington (state) Library Network, supported by its own computer-based bibliographic utility, which is beginning to provide on-line cataloging and acquisitions support to Washington libraries. The service area may be expanded to other northwest states in the latter part of 1977.

THE FOUNDING OF THE WESTERN INTERSTATE LIBRARY COORDINATING ORGANIZATION: A NARRATIVE REPORT ON THE PROJECT "DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A WESTERN INTERSTATE BIBLIOGRAPHIC NETWORK"

I. INTRODUCTION: THE PROPOSAL

In the fall of 1974 a group of librarians concerned with improving the sharing of library resources in the seventeen western states and British Columbia gathered in Denver for a meeting sponsored by the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) and arranged by Maryann Duggan, Director of the WICHE Continuing Education and Library Resources Program. The meeting participants agreed that the West, like the northeast and southeast regions of the country, should have a regional library network to support library resource sharing. Over the next six months, Maryann Duggan, assisted by task forces and individual western librarians, prepared a proposal and submitted it to the Council on Library Resources (CLR) to obtain funding for the design and development of a western interstate bibliographic network. After negotiations in which the term of the project funding was reduced from three years to one and a list of deliverable products was agreed upon, CLR offered the requested grant to WICHE.

The major objectives for the project were to develop: "(a) definitive design specifications, services, costs and governance structure, and (b) firm commitments via contract or letters of intent from participating states or institutions to proceed with implementation of the proposed network evolving from the design phase."* The general plan of procedure for the project envisioned: (a) development of specifications for the management, membership, legal and financial structure for the network, (b) preparation of requirements and cost estimates for development and implementation of the network, and (c) development of specifications for network products and services and for the technical, telecommunication and data base structure, including determination of detailed operating costs. (1, p.16).

An underlying purpose for the project was to link together several unique resources existing in the West: the developing on-line bibliographic systems of BALLOTS at Stanford University and the Washington Library Network (WLN), and the massive union card catalogs maintained to provide location data for interlibrary loan by the Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR) in Denver, the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center (PNBC) in Seattle, and the California State Library's Union

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*Letter from Maryann Duggan to Dr. Fred C. Cole, CLR, March 24, 1975.

Catalog (CSLUC) in Sacramento. During proposal negotiation, the scope of the design effort was expanded to include consideration of other bibliographic networking alternatives such as the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) and services offered by commercial vendors.

Figure 1, drawn from the proposal, illustrates the projected set of tasks and their scheduling. What is striking about these tasks, given benefit of hindsight, is their concentration on technical details of system design and specification, and their implied assumption that developing a western library network was simply a matter of putting available pieces together under the framework of a new and separate organization. The model on which these tasks were based appears to have been the type of regional service center developed in the East, such as the New England Library Network (NELINET), where a group of libraries organized a central office for themselves to contract for computer-based services from OCLC. In the event, as shall be described, these initial expectations led the project staff to follow a false scent, and in the end were proven invalid under conditions which are especially significant to the development of a national library network.

II. SITUATION IN THE WEST IN THE FALL OF 1975

One year after that initial Denver meeting of western librarians, the first project staff member was hired. The project director was not on board until December 1975. In addition to delaying the commencement of the design of a western network, this intervening year gave rise to a very different situation from that existing when the proposal was first outlined. The primary change was that two network organizations somewhat similar to NELINET appeared on the western scene. In the spring of 1975, BCR was revamped under the leadership of a new director and became a broker in the Rocky Mountain and Plains states of computer-based cataloging services from OCLC and on-line reference services from vendors. The AMIGOS Bibliographic Council was organized as a continuation of the Texas-based Interuniversity Council's experimental use of OCLC services and became the established broker for the southwestern states. (A third element in distribution of computer-based services has just recently appeared: The Honnold Library of the Claremont Colleges in California has been designated by OCLC as its Western Service Center to cover libraries in the Pacific rim states.)

In the commercial sector, vendors offering off-line computer-based cataloging services had become a more important factor since the previous year as new companies appeared, as vendor data bases expanded, and as their processing capabilities became more sophisticated. A number of western libraries were now purchasing catalog cards or microform catalogs from these vendors, in some cases in conjunction with establishing files needed for minicomputer-based circulation control systems.

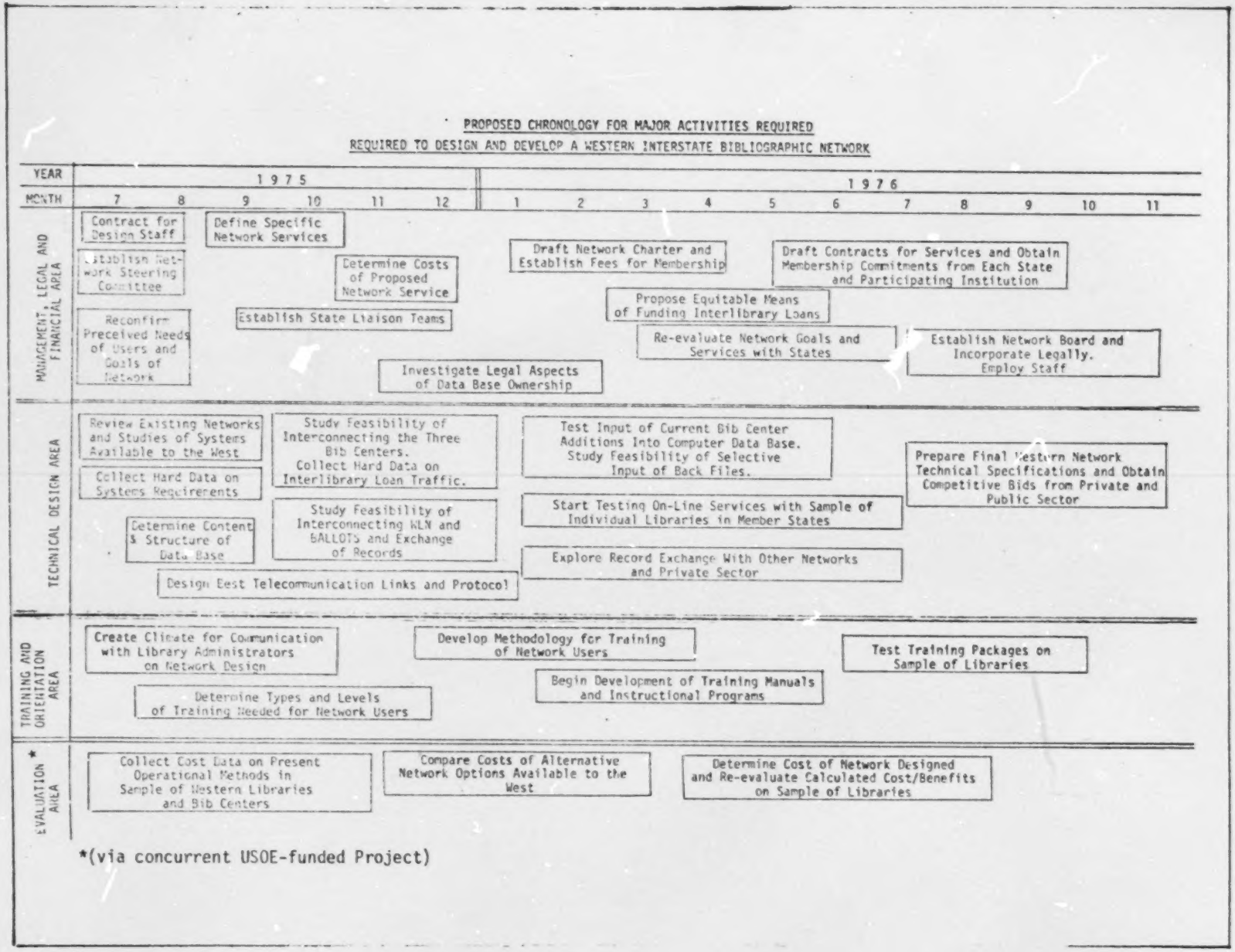
PROPOSED CHRONOLOGY FOR MAJOR ACTIVITIES REQUIRED
REQUIRED TO DESIGN AND DEVELOP A WESTERN INTERSTATE BIBLIOGRAPHIC NETWORK
YEAR
1975
1976
MONTH
7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
MANAGEMENT, LEGAL AND FINANCIAL AREA
Contract for Design Staff
Define Specific Network Services
Establish Network Steering Committee
Determine Costs of Proposed Network Service
Draft Network Charter and Establish Fees for Membership
Draft Contracts for Services and Obtain Membership Commitments from Each State and Participating Institution
Propose Equitable Means of Funding Interlibrary Loans
Reconfirm Preceived Needs of Users and Goals of Network
Establish State Liaison Teams
Re-evaluate Network Goals and Services with States
Establish Network Board and Incorporate Legally. Employ Staff
Investigate Legal Aspects of Data Base Ownership
TECHNICAL DESIGN AREA
Review Existing Networks and Studies of Systems Available to the West
Study Feasibility of Interconnecting the Three Bib Centers. Collect Hard Data on Interlibrary Loan Traffic.
Test Input of Current Bib Center Additions Into Computer Data Base. Study Feasibility of Selective Input of Back Files.
Prepare Final Western Network Technical Specifications and Obtain Competitive Bids from Private and Public Sector
Collect Hard Data on Systems Requirements
Start Testing On-Line Services with Sample of Individual Libraries in Member States
Determine Content & Structure of Data Base
Study Feasibility of Interconnecting WLN and BALLOTS and Exchange of Records
Explore Record Exchange With Other Networks and Private Sector
Design East Telecommunication Links and Protocol
TRAINING AND ORIENTATION AREA
Create Climate for Communication with Library Administrators on Network Design
Develop Methodology for Training of Network Users
Test Training Packages on Sample of Libraries
Begin Development of Training Manuals and Instructional Programs
Determine Types and Levels of Training Needed for Network Users
EVALUATION * AREA
Collect Cost Data on Present Operational Methods in Sample of Western Libraries and Bib Centers
Compare Costs of Alternative Network Options Available to the West
Determine Cost of Network Designed and Re-evaluate Calculated Cost/Benefits on Sample of Libraries
*(via concurrent USOE-funded Project)

Figure 1. Proposed Chronology for Major Activities.

Seven California libraries were using BALLOTS on an experimental basis to produce machine-readable data as input for preparing microform and printed catalogs. BALLOTS staff were marketing on-line access to that system's catalog data files for searching purposes. As yet, however, the BALLOTS file structure did not support an integrated record showing multiple holders for a cataloged item and local cataloging modifications for individual libraries. The staff was completing arrangements to install the University of California's program to print catalog cards with tailoring ("profiling") capabilities to meet special requirements of potential customers.

The WLN on-line system was being programmed by Boeing Computer Services and would not be operational for Washington libraries until after the summer of 1976. Because that system had been funded by the state of Washington, a higher priority was accorded to servicing Washington libraries than to offering service to libraries in other states.

The effects of these differences in the situation assumed for the project, as described in the proposal to CLR, were severe. The appearance of regional brokers or networks in the West was unexpected because the project proposed to CLR (as agreed upon by the organizations participating in the preparation and review of the proposal) implied that brokerage or distribution of computer-based services was to be the main objective for the western network for which specifications were to be developed during the coming year. In addition, this development can in part be traced to the fact that the governing boards of PNBC and BCR were reconstituted, and the new members did not feel bound by the commitment made by the previous board members to the concept of an integrated western network. The reduction in the term of the CLR grant from three years to one eliminated money needed by BALLOTS and WLN to perform design and development efforts in support of a western network. WLN and BALLOTS tasks to advance western network development could not be scheduled, thereby reducing those systems' capability to participate in technical design activities and to offer a significant alternative to OCLC for western libraries in the coming year.

III. FOLLOWING A FALSE SCENT: FALL 1975 - FEBRUARY 1976

As described in the first two quarterly reports to CLR (2), project staff first surveyed the range of organizations and data bases available for use in a western network, and studied telecommunications requirements for linking them together. The results of the study (3) were to prove valuable as a means for appreciating the rich complexity and diversity of networking activities already underway in the region. The study also revealed the current implementation schedules for the western bibliographic utilities and the implications for western networking in the appearance of the brokers on the scene.

The discovery of the changed factors in the situation faced by the network project raised some troublesome questions. By inclination, as well as by analysis of the situation, the project staff felt a strong need to take some highly visible action as quickly as possible. During the six months in 1974 and early 1975 when the proposal was being written, a spirit of enthusiasm for a western network had been engendered and a desire to get something going quickly was evidenced. However, delays in securing funding and hiring staff caused a loss of momentum due to the lack of visible activity throughout most of the remainder of 1975. Once on board, the staff thought that it was urgent that the networking project regain momentum by marketing some tangible products and services as soon as these could be arranged. This stimulus was reinforced by the need to have something to offer to the potential members for a network whose commitment (and signed contracts) must be secured by the end of the project if it were to be judged a success.

The success of BCR and AMIGOS at becoming service centers brokering OCLC and other utilities for most of the western states, the imminent establishment of the California Library Authority for Systems and Services (CLASS), and the continued development of WLN in Washington precluded the WICHE project from establishing the bibliographic network throughout the 17-state area envisioned in the proposal. There was obviously no point in trying to set up a network competing with these other organizations. But, project staff's responsibility under the terms of the grant clearly was to find a way to include these organizations somehow within the fabric of a "network" covering the whole region. AMIGOS posed a particular puzzle because that organization was based in Texas, outside the boundary of the West as defined in the proposal.

It must be admitted that some in the West viewed with a bit of antagonism the advance of OCLC into the region. These persons looked hopefully toward BALLOTS and WLN to provide home-grown alternatives that might stem the OCLC advance by offering better and cheaper services. However, neither of these utilities were ready to offer all the capabilities being provided already by OCLC. Library directors in the West who had the immediate need for one reason or another to procure on-line cataloging service had only one alternative: OCLC. Thus, the western network project was denied the possibility of brokering WLN and BALLOTS services, even if such a role would be accepted as not competing directly with BCR and AMIGOS, and if the western utilities would agree to marketing through a network rather than doing that task themselves.

A third difficulty, although one whose effect may have been more imagined than real, lay in the relationship of the project staff to the western library community. In the history of most other networks, a group of librarians had decided upon the need for a network, had created an organization, and had hired a staff. Thus, before the staff was hired, a charter set of librarians were already committed to the venture and had agreed upon a basic set of functions for the network. When staff were acquired, they had the benefit of knowing specifically what was expected of them and for whom they were to work. These conditions did

not exist in our case. There was no organization of librarians committed to the western network project; one of the major objectives for the project was to create one. There were no basic functions defined for the proposed network; the project staff were to specify them.

The staff was employed by WICHE, on behalf of the Western Council of State Librarians, to perform tasks defined in the grant proposal funded by CLR and with the guidance of a Steering Committee. The integration of the staff's responsibility to what sometimes appeared to be three diverse loci for direction and guidance was occasionally a concern. In the staff's understanding, the Western Council and WICHE viewed the project as an experiment that was free to succeed or fail, while we were committed to delivering the products to CLR specified in the grant proposal. The rest of the western library community had little stake in the project. Although representatives from several segments of the community participated in discussions leading to the submission of the proposal, they were to be recipients -- customers, really -- for bibliographic products and services to be delivered by a network created by a WICHE program.

One basic question with which the staff struggled internally, although the question was not directly posed by anyone else, was: "By whose authority are we acting?" There was no good answer to the question because no one but ourselves at this point was committed to a western network. Project staff certainly had no authority to compel anyone to cooperate in developing the network envisioned in the proposal to CLR; we were unsure of our ability to persuade anyone to cooperate unless there was some tangible benefit to offer them.

In January, 1976 the first issue of the Western Network Newsletter (4) was published. The Newsletter was intended to give visibility to the project among members of the western library community and to convey the impression that real activity was underway to create the proposed network. A "Chinese menu" of possible functions for the network was offered (see Figure 2) both to test the market potential for products and services that might attract members to support the network, and to suggest that there really was going to be a network in the very near future (an attempt at restoring a sense of momentum). The one word "broker" in the list of services was to trigger a strong reaction from the established brokers in the region, and led to our initiation into the sometimes nerve-wracking process of library coordination.

Under pressure to meet an early January date for submission of grant proposals to USOE, the staff hurriedly put together a proposal to study the costs and benefits of building a regional holdings file from available machine-readable data. (5) A sample of libraries in a four or five state area, such as the Pacific Northwest, would be selected to include all libraries within the same geographic locale in each state. It was hypothesized that a major portion of the interlibrary loan demand could be satisfied at the local level if all the library holdings in one area were

WESTERN NETWORK GOAL

The goal of the Western Network project is to plan for and develop an interstate bibliographic network to serve libraries of all types in the western states and British Columbia. The aim of the Network is to integrate, strengthen and extend existing services and to move toward new services; the Network will not be competitive with cooperative activities, networks, or systems already at work in the area.

Specifically, the Western Network project can:

1. Plan the organizational, administrative, governance, and legal structure for a permanent network organization representing all types of libraries, and facilitate the transition to a permanent organization and Board of Directors.

2. Provide a mechanism to ensure that the concerns and requirements of the West are represented in national library planning and the development of the national network (see page xi, "Toward a National Program for Library and Information Services: Goals for Action," prepared by NCLIS, 1975). As part of this, the Western Network will work with the Library of Congress (LC) and other interstate networks to share resources, technology, bibliographic data, etc.

3. Provide a vehicle to attract grant funds to support on-going research and development for the benefit of the region. A plan for the technical interconnection of western libraries and systems with LC and other major systems elsewhere in the country is a top priority.

4. Work with states, institutions, and associations in the West to develop interstate interlibrary loan protocols and an equitable funding structure to minimize uncompensated costs incurred by libraries that loan more items than they borrow.

5. Investigate and make recommendations for the development of a regional machine-readable bibliographic data base to improve resource sharing and to reduce technical processing costs.

6. Broker automated services from systems like The Ohio College Library Center (OCLC), The Washington Library Network (WLN), and BALLOTS.

7. Identify and obtain network services needed by libraries of all types in the West.

8. Provide efficiencies and eocnomies in training library staffs in utilizing network services effectively.

9. Study, recommend, and develop optimum telecommunication links; work with national organizations to improve telecommunication services and costs for libraries.

10. Develop cost and library processing analysis instruments that can be used by libraries for in-house studies.

11. Perform statewide cost analyses to support network planning.

12. Provide access to expertise and information in the field of library automation and resource sharing.

13. Study, recommend and obtain improved mechanisms for material delivery.

Figure 2. Possible Functions for a Western Network. (From issue #1 of the Western Network Newsletter.)

known. Unfortunately, in our haste the staff failed to coordinate the proposal with organizations in the Northwest, particularly PNBC, as should have been done. (The proposal was not funded.)

Also in January, twenty-one persons, selected by the staff or recommended by State Librarians and other knowledgeable persons, were appointed by the WICHE Executive Director to the project Steering Committee. This committee met on 2-3 February in Boise, Idaho (6). Alphonse Trezza, Executive Director of the National Commission for Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) and T. John Metz, Executive Director of the Midwest Region Library Network (MIDLNET),described their respective organizations and activities. Mr. Trezza pointed out that regional library organizations operating as non-profit corporations lacked political standing; the state library agencies as part of the governmental framework must be the key building blocks in a national library and information network. Mr. Metz stated that in the initial planning for MIDLNET there appeared to be a need for both a regional organization and for state-based networks.

The Steering Committee elected an Executive Board and then discussed a number of points in respect to the functions, organization and funding for the proposed western network, coming to the conclusion that the project staff should prepare a plan of action for developing the network as quickly as possible. The Committee moved that the western network, once organized, be housed within WICHE as a relatively autonomous agency similar in status to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) with its own board of directors. (Other possible legal bases for an interstate library organization are summarized in Appendix A.) The Committee also approved the staff's seeking to develop products and services on a pilot or experimental basis in areas not currently addressed by an existing organization in the region.

The deliberations of the Steering Committee, guided by the agenda prepared by the project staff and the history of the "Western Network" concept, continued the assumption embodied in the proposal that a type of "supernetwork" would be formed through the integration (in an unspecified way) of existing components -- particularly the BALLOTS and WLN computer-based systems and the regional union catalogs maintained by PNBC, BCR and CSLUC. But the recent changes in the situation, with no funding allocated for interfacing the computer systems and with traditional networking activities being vigorously undertaken in part of the region by BCR, left no obvious route for the proposed "western network" to take. The implications of this dilemma were not fully perceived by staff or the Committee during the meeting.

One very practical service rendered by project staff during the first quarter of 1976 was to assist a committee of the Montana Library Association in deciding how to proceed to develop a union list of serials for that state. As part of the task to gather data about components available on which to build western networking, we surveyed existing union serials data bases in the West to find out which would offer a good foundation on which to build a Montana union list. (7) In addition, we drafted a Request for Quotation letter that the committee used in obtaining bids from organizations having the capability to produce the Montana list. As a result of this assistance by the project staff, Montana selected MINITEX (the organization responsible for the Minnesota Union List of Serials on which the CONSER project was based) to establish and maintain the Union List of Montana Serials in a form that meets national bibliographic standards.

IV. REDIRECTION: FOCUSING ON THE COORDINATION FUNCTION, MARCH-APRIL 1976

Early in March, project staff called a meeting in Denver of the directors of the western utilities, brokers, and bibliographic centers to explore what the relationship between them and the proposed network might be. (8) The reaction triggered by the mention in the Newsletter of a possible brokering role came out in this meeting in the directors' objections to the Project's use of the term "network" and in their questions as to what the proposed western network could do that wasn't already being done. The directors were concerned that the WICHE group might compete with the established organizations for funding from the same sources.

By this time, project staff had concluded that "network" was not the most appropriate name for what the proposed "Western Network" was likely to become, but nothing better had yet been suggested. Further, there was no intention of competing with established organizations, as had clearly been stated both in the Newsletter and in discussion at the Steering Committee meeting. Such is the power of words, however (especially those whose definitions are in the process of evolution) that the terms "network" and "broker" prompted the directors of the other organizations to question the need for the project if it were to encroach upon their own spheres of activity. Nevertheless, the meeting participants did hammer out a general statement of the role for a regional "western network":

"...An important aspect of the Western Network's role should involve the linking of existing multi-state regions and their associated organizations, such as PNBC and BCR. The meeting participants identified services and tasks which the Western Network could undertake in carrying out the linking function. As input to the Western Network's planning

activities, the group suggested that the role of the Western Network could include aiding existing library networks and bibliographic centers in the West by providing a means for interstate and inter-regional communication, coordination, facilitation and experimentation through activities such as:

- assisting in the development of regional machine-readable data bases;
- stimulating exchange of machine-readable records among bibliographic utilities;
- working toward lower telecommunications costs;
- assisting in the development of interlibrary loan protocols and equity of funding;
- offering a forum for inter-regional network planning;
- facilitating access to sources of objective technical expertise; and
- collecting, analyzing, reporting and maintaining pertinent library planning and cost data for regional planning and development use.

The Network Directors in the West agreed to the following statement:

> This group urges that the future direction of the WICHE Library Resources Program take the form of providing a coordinating role among the existing regional networking components, rather than creating any super- or overlaying-structure." (9, p. 9-10)

The Denver meeting was immediately followed by another meeting of representatives of the utilities (including OCLC), requested by the Project Director and held in Washington, D.C., to explore the possibility of writing a proposal to interconnect the computers of the utilities so that users could obtain records from more than one data base. This was viewed by project staff as a natural follow-on to the current project, but this prospect did not materialize. This outcome dimmed the chance for obtaining grant funds at that time to continue networking development in the West. As a substitute, project staff wrote another proposal to study interstate interlibrary loan policies with the primary objective of recommending means for adjusting inequities between net borrowers and net lenders. (10) This proposal was not funded.

Early in April, the Western Council and the Steering Committee Executive Board met with project staff in Boulder. Although project staff had visited most of the State Librarians individually, this was the first time staff met formally with the Council as a whole. In preparation for these two meetings, staff prepared documents, one listing four alternative levels of activity for the proposed Western Network, ranging from no network to an organization integrating the western utilities and service centers (9), and the other listing three alternative levels for the continuing education (CE) portion of the program, ranging from termination, through carrying out only CE in support of networking, to a full set of interstate coordination activities in support of all CE needs. (11) The Western Council voted

that the staff concentrate on coordination of networking activities in the West and that as full a CE program be carried on as could be achieved with available resources.*

Discussion of these documents was a prelude to consideration of the budget for the WICHE Library Program for the coming fiscal year beginning July 1976. The State Librarians normally provided core funds for the program sufficient to retain the Program Director and a secretary, plus funds needed to match grants procured from funding agencies. (No support for the Library Program comes from the WICHE "hard money" budget, for administration, which is funded by fees from each of the 13 compacting states.) To carry out the level of networking and CE activity the Council had voted, it would be necessary to increase the Council's contribution by almost 50%. The Council agreed to consider funding the program at the increased level.

The next day, the Steering Committee Executive Board met, first separately, then jointly with the Western Council. They supported the action taken by the Western Council the previous day in selecting a coordinating rather than operating role for the project, reiterated the need for a project work plan, and directed the staff to set up joint meetings with the utility and service center directors. They were particularly concerned that the project staff not give any appearance of being in competition with the service centers.**

A most significant action taken by the Western Council and the Executive Board meeting jointly was to resolve the terminological problem with the "western network" title for the project. After a long list of names and acronyms were considered, agreement was reached on Western Interstate Library Cooperative Organization (WILCO). Vincent Anderson, South Dakota State Librarian, then suggested the change of "cooperative" to "coordinating." This was an indication that the cloak of authority required for the project staff to accomplish the proposal's objectives was to be forthcoming.***

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*Minutes, Annual Business Meeting, Western Council of the WICHE Continuing Education and Library Resources Program, April 809, 1976. (In rough draft form only.)

**Minutes of Western Network Executive Board Meeting held April 9, 1976. (In rough draft form only.)

***Minutes of Joint Meeting of Western Council of State Librarians and Western Network Executive Board held April 9, 1976. (In rough draft form only.)

Two major keys to the potential success of WILCO were derived from these meetings. First, WILCO was to be supported primarily by the State Librarians and not by charging fees for bibliographic products and services. Second, a coordinating function -- distinct and separate from an operational function -- was identified as a necessary element of interstate library resource sharing. Further, the State Librarians accepted responsibility for interstate coordination by agreeing to pay for it through their increased support for WILCO.

The significance of these decisions unfolded during the succeeding months and may yet remain not fully perceived. Library networks, whether service centers like BCR or cooperatives like the Bay Area Reference Center (BARC), are concerned mainly with responding to the immediate needs of their members. The utilities are likely to be governed by general principles of economic self-interest and self-preservation applying to any independent firm that acts as a market supplier. (12) Neither type of organization can easily countenance an infringement upon its autonomy in making decisions affecting how it responds to its members or customers, for to do so might reduce its ability to meet its responsibilities or to remain viable. When there is a potential benefit for them, however, they are generally willing to act cooperatively. The Council of Computerized Library Networks (CCLN) is an example of one such cooperative activity. Another has been the participation of OCLC along with the western service centers and utilities in WILCO meetings exploring how resource sharing can be facilitated. This suggests that the most feasible strategy for developing a national library network (NLN) would be one based on inviting participation of all major networks and utilities in collaboratively determining the NLN's structure.

The question is: Who issues the invitation? This question points to the function of coordination as an adjunct to delivery of products and services. While the utilities and service centers perform some coordinating activities, these are likely to be specific to the main purposes of the organization. Nor could most such organizations justify added costs to their users for carrying on more general coordination activities. Some organization other than the networking operating agencies is needed for general coordination of library resource sharing to address policies, procedures, standards and other broad issues involved in getting the most effective use out of the capabilities provided by networking operations. Such an agency can take advantage of established cooperative programs. Western librarians have a history of cooperation of which they are very proud, as exemplified in the multistate union catalogs established at PNBC and BCR. The most obvious candidates for exercising the coordinating function are the state or federal government library agencies with responsibility for expending public funds to improve library and information services for all citizens; in short, the state library agencies, national libraries and NCLIS.

In the West, the State Librarians have traditionally exercised some degree of interstate coordination through participation on the governing boards of the bibliographic and service centers. For example, Vincent

Anderson, South Dakota State Librarian and a member of the Western Council, is a member of the BCR governing board; he was also a member of the Steering Committee Executive Board. This use of interlocking directorates, while hard on the participants' schedules, can be an effective coordinating device.

As determined by the decisions made at these April meetings, the main function for WILCO is to carry out interstate resource sharing coordination on a continuing, rather than ad hoc, basis. The organization provides a forum in which all segments of the western library community can participate in discussing mutual concerns, in forming region-wide goals for cooperation, and in gaining a strong voice in national networking and resource-sharing planning. By stimulating communication among western librarians, assisting other organizations with advice, information and some administrative support, and facilitating the development of cooperation, WILCO catalyzes activities that make better use of library materials and people resources.

The environment in which a coordinating organization must function is fluid -- it changes from day to day and is always dependent upon the situation at the moment and the personalities involved. Consequently, a description of WILCO's function is undeniably imprecise, which is both bad and good. Because it is difficult to pin down the organization's purpose in simple, concrete, specific terms, and because there is no model with which to compare, there is a danger that people will not really understand the organization. Some may perceive a threat to their own authority (even where none exists), while others may fail to make use of the organization because they are not sure or do not remember what its capabilities or functions are. In addition, there is no historical tradition for the organization to provide security simply from the fact of long existence. But the lack of definition is an advantage, too, in that the organization has a great amount of flexibility to adapt to new demands and changes in the situation. Being fluid itself, the organization can be easily directed to address a wide range of problems.

V. FIRST ESSAY IN COORDINATION: MAY-JUNE 1976

Early in May, the Executive Board met in Seattle together with the directors of western utilities and service centers invited by Eleanor Montague. This meeting served chiefly as the means of assuring all concerned that WILCO was intended to assist and supplement the activities of the networking components, rather than interfere in any way. As a result, all participants agreed to meet again the following month to discuss how they could work together more closely in the future.

Staff then began drafting the major product resulting from the project, Library Networking in the West: The Next Three Years. (13) The paper responded to the Executive Board's request for a plan to coordinate western

library networking, and was written with several objectives in mind. First, the document should be a compilation and concrete expression of the steps needed to advance interstate library resource sharing. Second, the document should serve to focus discussion and allow agreement to be reached on which organizations would participate in carrying out the various tasks. Third, discussion should include establishing some time frames both to assist in sequencing tasks and to stimulate their initiation. Finally, the first draft purposely included issues dealing with the intentions of utilities and service centers that, although perhaps presumptuous for the WILCO staff to raise, were key to envisioning how the activities of those agencies might interrelate as the future unfolded.

Her contribution to the first draft of this document marked the completion of Maryann Duggan's service to the Western Council and western librarians in sparking development of coordinated resource sharing in the region. She then withdrew from WICHE and entered upon a well-earned change of scenery and pace as the librarian for the Veterans Administration Hospital in Boise, Idaho. The CLR project was thereupon officially combined with other WICHE library program activities in the newly established Western Interstate Library Coordinating Organization with Eleanor Montague becoming the WILCO Director.

In early June, the utility and service center directors met again with the Executive Board at Palo Alto and in three days of hard work redrafted the Library Networking document twice. (Credit for the redrafting capability must go to the project secretary, Louise Martin, who attended the meeting along with the rest of the staff. Each day she kept notes on the discussion and each night she managed to retype and duplicate the document for use the next day.) This arduous meeting was moderated by Kevin Bunnell, director of the WICHE division in which the library program was based. H. Paul Schrank, Jr., chairman of the OCLC board, participated and stressed that OCLC should be included in the set of organizations collaborating in advancing western library networking. All participants were motivated by a genuine spirit of cooperation and concentrated on the work at hand. There was remarkably general agreement, at least in spirit if not in all the detail, with the assumptions, goals and tasks for coordinating networking development over the next several years.

Following this meeting, Eleanor Montague and Karl Pearson of the project staff visited CLR and NCLIS in Washington to brief them on project activities. Concern had been expressed that the project had gotten off the track in the period since the February organizing Steering Committee meeting because the project was focusing on a coordinating organization rather than a single operating network integrating all the components in the West.

As touched upon in the discussion with CLR, the matter of WILCO's authority to perform coordination is a central issue that cannot be overlooked. The authority for coordination of multistate networking rests in the hands of the State Librarians as the primary agents having the political base necessary to integrate state and interstate resource sharing needs and capabilities on a sustained, on-going basis. Most libraries are supported

by public funds; the State Librarians (in most cases as a matter of state law) have the central responsibility in a state for ensuring that those funds are expended in the best public interest. WILCO, as an organization founded and supported by State Librarians, operates as their agent in carrying out interstate resource sharing coordination.

A second issue raised in the CLR meeting was the matter of WILCO governance. This is a complex subject. WILCO is one of a number of programs of the Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE). The Commission consists of 39 persons, with 3 members appointed by the governor of each of the 13 compacting states, and is responsible for overseeing the performance of the provisions of the compact. These relate generally, rather than specifically, to the improvement of higher education for the citizens of western states through the sharing of facilities and other resources. WICHE is the agency created to carry out programs that fit within the scope of the compact. These programs over the years since WICHE's establishment have become numerous and diverse, and serve many constituencies in the states beyond faculty and students in higher education institutions. The programs are normally instigated, not by WICHE itself, but by groups in the states requesting the program, or a WICHE staff member who matches a need for service expressed by some group in the West with a source of funding (normally federal or foundation funds). WILCO's antecedent, the Continuing Education and Library Resources Program, was instituted by WICHE when several of the State Librarians requested the program and provided funding for staff.

As an organization, WICHE does not itself usually establish programs. Instead, WICHE provides the administrative skeleton to support the programs that are, in effect, assigned to it. It is a headquarters unit (to those familiar with military terminology) to which operational detachments are attached, each with its own particular mission to carry out in achieving an overall goal that is set, not by the headquarters, but by some higher commend. The higher command, for WICHE, is the Commission, representing the governors of the western states. The mission for individual programs is quite frequently established by groups outside the Commission-WICHE administration framework. This is the case for WILCO, where the mission is defined by the State Librarians who fund the program and provide the operational supervision for its performance, within the overall goals and policies established and overseen by the Commission. In concrete terms, the Commission determines whether or not a program should be established, and monitors program objectives and performance to ensure that program activities stay within the scope of the interstate compact. The Commission approves the submission of proposals to funding agencies. Day-to-day supervision on the Commission's behalf is the responsibility of the WICHE Executive Director and his staff. But, the marching orders for a program usually come from another source. In WILCO's case, this source is the Western Council of State Librarians.

Performance of the CLR grant, which called for the establishment of an organization for western resource sharing, added another layer of complexity to the governance question. For a time, staff considered the possibilities that the resource sharing organization would be separate from the WICHE Continuing Education and Library Resources Program, and perhaps even independent from WICHE itself. The latter possibility was tabled after the first Steering Committee meeting when the Committee moved to seek semi-autonomous status within the WICHE framework. The former possibility was discarded after the Western Council selected the WILCO name at the April meeting and when the Continuing Education and Library Resources Program Director, Maryann Duggan, decided to leave WICHE in May. At that point, WILCO quite naturally subsumed the other activities of the Program and the CLR Project Director, Eleanor Montague, became Program Director for the whole WICHE library program.

The CLR project had caused the creation of the Steering Committee, which added another component to the governance of WILCO through the period remaining until completion of the CLR project in August 1976. The Committee, and especially its Executive Board, were active in guiding the WILCO staff and in ensuring the participation of several key western librarians and networking organizations in WILCO activities. Before dissolution of the Steering Committee with the completion of the CLR project, the point was well-demonstrated that the participation of these key figures in western resource sharing coordinating via WILCO should continue.

With this background, it can be seen that the governance of WILCO is multifaceted, requiring the cooperative participation of the WICHE Commission, the WICHE administration, the Western Council, and key librarians and directors of networking organizations. The Western Council, however, is recognized as the primary source for WILCO governance. While potentially subject to stress should one group become at odds with the others, this group governance takes advantage of the special strengths each group offers in relating the WILCO programs to the political and governmental structures and activities in the western states as well as to the particular concerns of the librarians who must actually perform resource sharing activities.

An important point for WILCO and other regional and national coordinating agencies is the necessity for devising communication channels and management structures that provide adequate contact with the people whose direction and policy guidance is required, despite the limited amount of time that such people have in view of all the other demands on their time and attention.

A second point is that state governments have responsibility for coordination of intrastate and interstate library resource sharing coordination. State government representatives should play a primary role in the governing structure of multistate coordinating organizations. Federal and foundation funding support for library networks ought to be channelled primarily through the state library agencies rather than through grants administered by federal agencies or through awards made directly to individual libraries.

VI. WHO DOES WILCO REPRESENT? JULY 1976

The second and final meeting of the organizing Steering Committee took place during the morning and afternoon of July 17, in Chicago just prior to the American Library Association annual conference. This meeting was attended by several observers as well as about 2/3 of the Steering Committee members. After reviewing the progress of the project since the February Steering Committee meeting, the staff presented the latest draft of Library Networking in the West for the Committee's review. For the most part, the Committee and observers accepted with only minor modification the content of the document, but questioned just who was speaking through the document: Only the staff and Western Council? All libraries in the WILCO member states? Or the entire western library community? Can WILCO speak for the utilities and service centers?

This question of who WILCO represents was not fully resolved during the meeting. The Steering Committee Executive Board took the position that the document should represent a consensus of the whole western library community on objectives for networking in the region, and thus be a unified expression of western concerns as input to the planning of a national library network. But this begged the more basic question of the range and bounds of WILCO membership and the governance of the organization. Several members of the Steering Committee urged that librarians other than just the State Librarians should participate in governance.

At the June meetings in Palo Alto, David Weber suggested that librarians and utility and service center directors should have a formal mechanism for participation in Western Council decision making. Vincent Anderson, Donald Simpson and David Weber were appointed an ad hoc committee of three to outline such a mechanism. They reported back with a design for two groups acting in both an advisory and a participatory capacity in conjunction with the Western Council. One group would represent resource libraries, defined as any library having a collection likely to be drawn upon by other libraries through interlibrary loan. The other group would represent networking component organizations that develop the means for resource sharing, such as the computer systems, telecommunications, service centers of various kinds, and so on. Each group would be chartered to have responsibility for decision-making within the purvue of their normal interests and concerns, but major policy decisions affecting coordination among two or more organizations would be reviewed and ratified by the Western Council. This design was presented for discussion at a meeting of many of the Western Council members during the evening of July 17.

The Western Council considered the Palo Alto group's proposal for WILCO governance together with another idea suggested earlier in the day. This alternative governance structure identified the same groups as in the Palo Alto proposal, but accorded each group and the Western Council equal weight in decision making for WILCO. A variation on that structure,

perhaps a more workable one, would have each group and the Western Council electing two or three members to a WILCO governing board. This alternative governance structure had a major drawback in the opinion of some Western Council members in that it seemed to confine them more than desirable to perhaps just one set of activities, thereby reducing their ability and the staff resources available to concentrate on other areas of interest or need. Furthermore, the structure might impinge upon the State Librarians' legal responsibilities for representing the interests of all libraries within their states. In general, despite the virtue that the alternative structure accorded full policy-making status to all component organizations involved in resource sharing, the structure appeared to be more complex and formalized than necessary. The Western Council ended the meeting with an agreement to arrive at a final decision on the governance structure for WILCO at the next Western Council meeting, now scheduled for October 25-26, 1976.

With the completion of the CLR-funded project, the Steering Committee established under the auspices of the project has been dissolved. It is expected that the Western Council will establish needed mechanisms whereby the expertise, good will, and operational responsibility of librarians who must carry out resource sharing can be tapped to assist the State Librarians and WILCO staff in identifying and carrying out their coordinating activities. WILCO's institutional setting is unique among the nation's regional networking organizations. Although the Western Council, which is WILCO's governing board, is similar to the New England Library Board (NELB) in that it consists of the State Librarians, the Council has taken advantage of an existing multistate compact for higher education to institutionalize their cooperative spirit rather than develop an interstate library compact such as that on which NELB is based. The Council has supported a small staff at WICHE for the last eight years which, up to this year, has been concerned primarily with continuing education for librarians. As a result of the CLR-funded project, the Council has restructured and renamed the WICHE program to create WILCO. Currently, WILCO is operating in three program areas: networking and resource sharing coordination, continuing education coordination, and library and information science research and development.

VII. MOVING ON THE FIRST TASKS: JULY-AUGUST 1976

Based on the results of discussions at the Palo Alto meeting in June, and the need to prepare western inputs for a second meeting of networking leaders called by the Library of Congress and CLR for early August, Karl Pearson of the WILCO staff prepared a discussion paper on telecommunications and interconnection of utilities and service centers. (14) This paper described a concept for an integrated and comprehensive telecommunications system that might be developed to support library resource sharing throughout the country. The paper suggested that a national task force, with representatives from all organizations affected, be established to begin designing such a system in the near future. But the basic purpose of the document was to take the first step in carrying out the tasks presented in Library Networking in the West associated with the goal of interconnecting western utilities and service centers. Three concepts, around which proposals might be drafted were offered: 1) to provide a connection to LC from BALLOTS and WLN; 2) to interconnect BALLOTS and WLN; and 3) to install a data concentration capability at the service centers to reduce the communication costs charged to their clientele for using the utilities.

At the ALA conference meeting on the afternoon of 17 July, the utility and service center directors (joined by Henriette Avram of LC, Ruth Tighe of NCLIS, and Ronald Miller of NELINET) used the paper as a springboard to set their highest priorities for making up a consolidated western position to present to the participants at the August LC meeting. It was unfortunate that the NCLIS and LC representatives were at a disadvantage in following the course of the discussion because they came into this meeting without sharing the same background as the others who had been present at the Palo Alto meeting. Nevertheless, strong points were made that the westerners wanted representation in LC network planning, and (on LC's side) that it was important to have clear objectives before initiating any costly technological development.

By the end of the meeting, Hank Epstein of BALLOTS and Roderick Swartz for WLN indicated that access to LC files using the method employed by a current Research Library Group (RLG) project to connect the New York Public Library's (NYPL) computer to the LC computer was a top priority interest of theirs. James Kennedy of AMIGOS and Donald Simpson of BCR suggested their high priority interest lay in installing minicomputers at their service centers to reduce data transmission costs and support other applications for local needs. All agreed on the necessity to develop these capabilities in the near future, despite the probability that some redesign may be necessary when a standard and generalized library telecommunications system is specified. In sum, the utility and service center directors were of the opinion that it would be cost-justifiable to develop interim capabilities for use as soon as possible while undertaking a thorough and comprehensive design for a system that will meet library communications needs.

Eleanor Montague, Roderick Swartz, David Weber and James Kennedy attended the meeting of network directors held at LC on 9 August 1976. Other attendees were favorably impressed with the amount of coordination that had been performed in the West. Eleanor Montague was appointed to a task force headed by Larry Livingston of CLR to prepare an outline of national networking goals and tasks for discussion at another meeting at LC scheduled for December 1976.

Subsequent to the LC meeting, the WILCO staff prepared comments on the outline document Henriette Avram of LC had produced for discussion at the meeting. Mrs. Avram had also requested that specific ideas for network development be sent to her in September. By the end of August, WILCO staff had met with representatives of WLN and the directors of AMIGOS and BCR to discuss the details they wished to present to LC in pursuit of their high priority concerns in the area of network technology. Staff prepared and distributed draft concept papers for review and discussion by these representatives via telephone conference call early in September, in time for Eleanor Montague to convey their comments to LC during a visit to Washington scheduled for 14 September.

Upon incorporation of comments made by reviewers of the latest draft of Library Networking in the West, the document will be widely distributed throughout the western library community for general review and comment. However, the document is already being used as the basis for initiating the most urgent tasks described therein. Now comes the difficult and challenging business of translating ideas on paper into real accomplishments.

VIII. SUMMING UP

As Maryann Duggan was fond of point out, particularly when staff spirits were flagging because of one momentary difficulty or another, we were engaged in an action research project to find out what would work and what would not. Well, what did we find out? And what difference did the project make? Is coordination necessary, and if so, what is its worth?

Going back to the major objectives and purposes of the proposal, the project has had somewhat different outcomes than originally expected. Definitive design specifications and oeprating costs for a network could not be produced because WILCO turned out to be something other than an organization concentrating on offering computer-based products and services. The governance, legal and financial structure of WILCO have not been finalized, although the general outlines are well established; WILCO is to remain based on an interstate compact with members consisting of the State Librarians representing all librarians in their states, and with funding coming from the state library agencies supplemented by grants and contracts for undertaking

specific projects. As a coordinating agency, WILCO will advise on technical matters but is not likely to have any operational responsibility for building and running computer-based systems or data bases (except perhaps in the continuing education area). The concept of linking the service center union card catalogs together has been placed on the table; in the meantime, it is expected that the shortage of holdings records for new acquisitions will gradually shift from union catalog card files to machine-readable data bases in a state, regional, and national hierarchy. BALLOTS and WLN are not likely to be interconnected within the near future because both organizations will concentrate first on establishing connections to the LC files. As the basic conclusion reached by the research represented by this project, WILCO's forte lies not in building a network but rather in helping the western library community make best use of the products and services offered through networking components.

The associated USOE-funded project to investigate cost and funding for networking has likewise undergone a shift between expected and actual outcomes. Originally, that project was envisioned as providing data on which comparisons could be made between manual and computer-supported technical processing operations, with a view to identifying potential cost savings that a western network might offer. In fact, the project was carried out wien networking was already well advanced in the region, but with such rapid evolution in the technology that comparative data would not be valid once collected. Nevertheless, the project did develop cost analysis tools of value to individual libraires in examining their own technical processing operations. (15-) One library, outside the West oddly enough, has already contracted with WILCO for performing pre-, during, and post-OCLC installation analyses of its cataloging and interlibrary loan costs.

Our overall evaluation of the western network project's outcome is speculative and subjective. We can point only to a few specific indicators. Perhaps the most significant indicator is that the Western Council decided to continue -- and substantially increase -- funding support for a coordinating staff at WICHE. This financial support meets the bottom line criterion for success of the project, which was to obtain commitment from potential members of an interstate bibliographic network. Presently, ten western State Library agencies are paying WICHE a total of $163,704 to operate WILCO through June, 1977. There is a good prospect that at least one, and perhaps more, states will join the Western Council by that date.

Another indicator is the status achieved by WILCO in the short time it has been in existence. The organization has been accepted both by key western librarians and by national networking leaders as a legitimate regional forum for exploring the interests and concerns of librarians and others engaged in library cooperation and research sharing. This acceptance is necessarily a fragile thing, and depends upon a continuing demonstration of WILCO's coordinating and action-catalyzing capability through an unbiased, holistic, interpretation of regional resource-sharing needs and means. Not only have the directors of networking components cooperated with the WILCO

staff, but also many of the librarians to whom staff has talked at various library association meetings have enthusiastically welcomed the emergence of the organization and have endorsed its objectives and activities.

One result of the project, whose effect may be immeasurable, has been the bringing together of networking component directors to discuss mutual interests. These discussions have also touched upon the interests of users in how utilities and service centers operate. Staff is of the opinion that such discussions would not have occurred without the stimulation of the project, and that the cause of resource sharing would have been somewhat less advanced had the discussions not taken place. On the other hand, we cannot point to any specific alteration in the course of events that was unquestionably caused by the project's intervention.

The major research findings resulting from the project have to do with the need and mechanisms for coordination of resource sharing as a necessary adjunct and complement to the operational components of networking. Where strong and autonomous organizations are in place, they are unlikely to accept undesirable infringement on their scope of operations. However, these organizations are willing to cooperate with one another insofar as there is no threat to their own autonomy, and can accept some degree of coordination from an outside agency so long as that agency's activities supplement and enhance their own.

Coordinating library resource sharing is essentially a political, rather than technical, problem, and solutions must be sought in the realm of the governance discipline more than in management theory. The experience of WILCO affirms NCLIS' opinion that the key building block for national library networking is the state library agency, in large part because of the political nature of coordination. Most libraries are publicly-funded. The rights and duties of local and state governments must be acknowledged. No consortium or non-profit corporation can have the scope of legal jurisdiction and political authority that governmental library agencies have. Although consortia are appropriate for carrying out specific programs subscribed to by cooperating and like-minded members, only a government agency has the scope of interest and standing necessary for balancing the interests of public and private libraries, their patrons, and tax payers.

Whether or not a regional coordinating organization is necessary is a question not answered completely by this project. In our opinion, a regional body is desirable because: (1) it is easier to coordinate national networking activities among a relatively few regional groupings of states than with all the states individually; (2) traditional regional groupings, as evidenced by the regional library associations and service centers, offer a ready-made commonality of interest that makes coordination easier; (3) resource sharing probably is more cost-effective among adjacent states rather than among widely-scattered states; (4) a regional grouping potentially provides stronger support for states that are poorer in resources and population; (5) adjacent states have problems that are similar, but that are not necessarily problems in other parts of the

country; e.g., the great distances between population centers in the West; and (6) the organization may be perceived as offering neutral ground on which state or local networking issues can be addressed objectively. Without some regional organization, cooperative arrangements would depend, as they often do now, on ad hoc agreements between two adjacent states or among libraries with certain common interests. Service centers might perform the regional coordinating function, but member libraries might not be willing or able to pay for such intangible services, and service centers that are private corporations would not have the legal standing to undertake exercise of what essentially is a public function. Neither of these alternatives appear to be preferable to the employment of regional coordinating organizations governed by State Librarians.

Our experience has demonstrated the necessity for effective communications in coordinating such a large, heterogeneous group of librarians who are geographically and institutionally scattered. It is difficult and time consuming to keep in touch with all persons in a state or region who should be acquainted with current coordinating activities. When there are fast-moving situations (in our experience, a frequent case), communications problems may cause serious delays in completing coordination tasks.

The key people who must be involved in coordination are over-burdened with meetings, committees, and other extra-curricular activities that must be performed in addition to their normal daily responsibilities. Schedule conflicts abound that make it extremely difficult to select a date for a coordination meeting that is agreeable to all who should attend. Yet, meetings are invaluable for allowing a group to interact and reach consensus in a short space of time. (We have found that two-day meetings are best when the group is to address a large or ill-defined subject. The first day allows participants to express their initial views and to get acquainted both with each other and the subject. The real work of the meeting is performed on the second day.) But meetings are costly both in terms of travel and living expenses and in their demands upon the time of busy people. If the group is fairly large, then each individual has a relatively small amount of time available to speak, and some individuals cannot make their most useful contributions in verbal interchanges. Coordinating agencies need to explore how telecommunications capabilities -- telephone, teletype, television, facsimile, and computer conferencing -- can be used to supplement or improve upon the traditional methods of communication -- correspondence, phone calls, and meetings.

One other finding of our research is an obvious truth, but one whose importance cannot be overemphasized. The primary key to the success of a coordinating organization lies in the particular personal strengths of the individuals involved. An operational organization, such as a library, has self-evident objectives and procedures that are generally

understood by staff and associated organizations. The institution itself has a life of its own that cannot be greatly altered by the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals staffing the organization. But, a library coordinating organization is not institutionalized -- the organization is too new, and its role is undergoing rapid evolution. The organization's objectives are not yet fully evident and procedures are in the process of definition. The perception of the coordinating organization by others is, understandably, confused and frequently ambiguous. This situation provides a showcase in which the efforts of key individuals, and their reactions to each other, are spotlighted. Success can be directly related to the actions of individuals with desire, energy, time and vision, and with the ability to make others see that same vision.

WILCO exists because such individuals wanted it, worked for it, and conceived unique and innovative possibilities for what the organization might accomplish. We of the WILCO staff acknowledge our debt to them for their guidance and vision. The enthusiastic interest in WILCO by a host of librarians in the West and elsewhere is, in the final summing up, the best evidence of how successful the efforts of these individuals have been, and of the worth of the CLR-supported project responsible for the founding of WILCO.

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WILCO PUBLICATIONS

Publications listed below with a price and WICHE catalog number may be ordered, pre-paid, from Publications Unit, WICHE, P.O. Drawer P, Boulder, Colorado 80302. Other items may be requested from WILCO at the same address; items followed by an asterisk are not stocked, and Xerox copies at $.10 per page will be furnished upon request.

1. A Proposal for Design and Development of a Western Interstate Bibliographic Network. Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Boulder, Colorado, March 21, 1975, 88p. (*)

2. Initiating the Design and Development of a Western Interstate Bibliographic Network. WICHE, Boulder, Colorado:
First Quarterly Report, July-September 1975. December 15, 1975, 83p.
Second Quarterly Report, October-December 1975. February 25, 1976, 54p.
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Fourth (Final) Quarterly Report, April-August 1976, October 22, 1976,125p. (Cat. #2B136, $3.50)

3. Pearson, K. M. and the Project Staff. A Review of Potential Components for the Western Bibliographic Network, WICHE, March 5, 1976, 72 p. (Catalog #2B121, $2.50)

4. WILCO Newsletter. (Formerly Western Network Newsletter.) WILCO, WICHE, Boulder, Colorado. Number 1-

5. Assessing the Impact of On-Line Access to Location Data on Interlibrary Loan Patterns. WICHE, Boulder, Colorado, 5 January 1976, 67p.(*)

6. Minutes of the Western Network Project Organizing Steering Committee Meeting, Boise, Idaho, February 2-3, 1976, WICHE, February 18, 1976. (*)

7. Pearson, Karl M., Jr. Survey of Union Serials Data Bases in the West. WILCO, WICHE, Boulder, Colorado, 30 September 1976, 8 p. (N-16/000/02).(*)

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9. Montague, Eleanor A. et al. Western Interstate Cooperative Bibliographic Network Alternatives for Action. WICHE, Boulder, Colorado, March 1976, 66 p. (Draft working paper; limited distribution.)

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12. Gassler, Scott. Economic Issues in the Networking of Library Technical Support Services. WICHE, Boulder, Colorado, October 1976, 20p.(Cat. #2B131, $1.50)

13. Library Networking in the West: The Next Three Years. WILCO, WICHE, September 1976, 19p. (Fifth Draft) (Cat. #2B127)

14. Telecommunications and Message Processing for Library Networking: A System Concept and Proposal Outlines. WILCO, WICHE, July 7, 1976, 12 p. (*)

15. Survey of Costs in Technical Processing and Interlibrary Loan -- Survey Tables and Cast Studies Results (Cat. #2B129, $not set yet)

16. Survey of Costs in Technical Processing and Interlibrary Loan -- Summary (Cat. #2B130, $not set yet)

17. Librarian's Handbook for Costing Network Services (Cat. #2B134, $not set yet)

18. Costs in Technical Processing and Interlibrary Loan -- Data Processing Users Manual (Cat. #2B133, $not set yet)

19. Final Report of the Project "Conducting Cost and Funding Studies Concerning Development and Implementation of Western Interstate Bibliographic Network" (Cat.#2B132, $not set yet)

APPENDIX A

POSSIBLE LEGAL BASES FOR AN INTERSTATE LIBRARY ORGANIZATION

In preparing for the February Steering Committee meeting, project staff explored alternative legal bases on which a network organization might be founded.* Oscar Miller, Head Law Librarian at the University of Colorado, and Dr. Kevin Bunnell, at that time manager of the WICHE General Regional Programs Division (which included the WICHE Continuing Education and Library Resources Program in which the project was being performed), agreed to present to the Steering Committee a briefing on the advantages and disadvantages of several legal bases: an association, non-profit corporation, authority, limited interstate compact and general interstate compact. As these are issues of wide interest, particularly as more thought is given to the relationships and roles of the components that will be party in some way to a national library network, Miller's and Bunnell's presentations will be summarized here.

Association

An association is based on a commonality of interest among the members, but has few formal or legal powers, and these are derived mainly from any contract entered into by the members. Many library consortia are founded on the basis of an association, buttressed in many instances by a formal contract, charter, or constitution. Funding for an association usually consists mostly of dues or other contributions from members. Because of the limited powers of associations, this basis is too weak a foundation for an organization that must operate in an environment dominated by independent organizations directed by strong-minded individuals.

Non-Profit Corporation

A non-profit corporation has several advantages. It is relatively quick and inexpensive to set up, it can operate with few legal restraints, it can acquire and dispose of property, and it protects its members from personal liability for corporate actions. For these reasons, a number of library networks such as BCR and SOLINET have been established as non-profit corporations. However, there are some disadvantages that mitigate

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*An important source of information was: Martin, Harry S., Legal Aspects of Establishing a Regional Interstate Library Network in the Southwest. SLICE Project, Southwest Library Association, June 1974, 93 p.

against choice of the non-profit corporation as a base for a regional coordinating organization. The corporation loses tax-exempt status if it attempts to influence legislation (although tax exemption for a non-profit agency may convey little real benefit). More importantly, the corporation has no privileged legal standing in relation to governmental agencies. Some libraries are not empowered to pre-pay for products or services, and thus could not convey funds to a corporation to defray set-up and planning costs. As a national network develops, and if additional federal funding becomes available to support state and local government programs for coordinating resource sharing, a regional coordinating organization operating as a non-profit corporation might be ineligible to obtain funds from the federal government and might have difficulty in obtaining funds passed through from state agencies. Furthermore, governors and legislators might be loath to allow a private corporation to administer what essentially are governmental powers that are normally exercised by state library agencies, no matter how desirable the activities of the non-profit corporation.

Authority

An authority is a form of organization that is governmental in nature, yet is independent of direct political pressures that might interfere with its ability to perform long-range planning and carry out activities that are primarily technical rather than managerial. An authority is usually self-supporting through fees paid by users of its services, may have the ability to raise capital through issuing bonds backed by government, normally is allowed a wide scope of activity within specified bounds set by the governments establishing the authority, and may have regulatory as well as advisory powers. One disadvantage is that an authority is appropriate mainly for performing specific activities within a restricted geographic area, and thus would not serve as well as the basis for an organization having non-specific functions and operating in a very large geographic area. Also, an authority requires a long period of time to establish, particularly where more than one government is involved.

Interstate Compact

Interstate compacts offer many advantages as the legal basis for a library resource sharing organization. The organization created under the terms of the compact becomes an agency of each of the compacting states, and thus enjoys all benefits pertaining thereto in respect to the transfer of funds, status in relation to other governments, and political authority. At the same time, the organization created by the compact may be allowed a degree of autonomy similar to an authority's, and thus it may enjoy a wide scope for management, obtain funding from sources other than governmental budgets, and set its own administrative policies. State governors and legislators usually look with favor on interstate compacts as a device

by which to resist the transfer of political power to the federal government in conducting interstate affairs. The interstate compact can even be used as the legal basis for international undertakings, as several compacts between state and local jurisdictions in the United States and Canada have shown.* The primary disadvantage of the interstate compact is the length of time required to draft and enact it in each of the compacting states. Amending an existing compact may be as difficult and time-consuming as enacting a new one. The Council of State Governments may be called upon to assist in drafting compact legislation.

Interate compacts may be characterized as specialized or generalized. Specialized conpacts, such as the interstate library compacts that many states have adopted, narrowly define the scope of activities that can be performed. The proliferation in recent years of specialized interstate compacts has caused some governors and legislators to question whether they are all needed, and if economy and effectiveness could be gained through combining some of their activities. On the other hand, generalized compacts, such as the regional higher education compacts, although offering more scope for activities that cannot be precisely defined or forecast at the time of enactment, are subject to subsequent interpretation in respect to what activities appropriately fall within their scope, and the organization administering the compact may not be fully responsive to specific needs of a particular program operated under the compact.

The existing interstate library compacts have been enacted in many states in one of two forms: The Illinois version and the New York version. The former version requires the compacting states to be contiguous, can be construed as limited to public library cooperation, and does not provide an administering agency. The New York version avoids the first two limitations of the Illinois version, but provides only for the establishment of interstate library districts as administrative agencies for carrying out activities authorized by the compact. The compact requires that all cooperating public library agencies (and allows that all cooperating private library agencies) in an interstate district be members of the governing board for such a district. This latter provision could make the structure of a network covering a wide geographic area too awkward for efficient operation. Neither version offers a means for securing state funding for the operation of services or for administering any overall organization to coordinate the performance of agreements among libraries that may be prepared under the terms of the compact.

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*Zimmerman, Frederick L. and Mitchell Wendell. The Law and Use of Interstate Compacts. The Council of State Governments, Lexington, Kentucky, January 1976, 133p.

In the West, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming have enacted the New York version of the interstate library compact. North Dakota has enacted the Illinois version. Eight states have no interstate library compact.

Federal-Interstate Compact

Harry Martin has suggested that a joint federal-interstate compact might be the most preferable legal base for library networks because it would assure federal participation and funding. In fact, the federal government, both through the operation of a number of libraries within the states and through services used by state, local and private libraries that are provided by agencies such as the Library of Congress, is an active associate of other library agencies in current cooperative programs. However, the outline of the national network should be better understood and agreed-upon before an attempt is made to draft a compact. At present, there are too many unresolved questions and issues respecting the roles of networking components in the future as technology evolves to allow the preparation of a statute that would be sure to fit future conditions.

Selection of a Basis for WILCO

After considering these alternatives, the Steering Committee agreed that the western regional higher education compact and the WICHE organization offered overriding advantages as an immediately available legal base for a western resource sharing organization. In fact, a library program to provide continuing education opportunities had operated at WICHE for several years. By taking advantage of an existing organizational home, no time would be lost in establishing the new networking organization. The existing compact would automatically provide a political base for the new organization as an agency of each state. Finally, the structure and operating policies of WICHE appeared to offer an adequate degree of autonomy to a library networking program such that the subsidiary organization would have the freedom to set up its own operating policies and be guided by its own board.

Despite the hospitable environment WICHE currently offers the library program, there is a potential for difficulty in any arrangement where one organization hosts another. It is probably desirable that regional library coordinating organizations should be based on separate interstate library compacts rather than on existing higher education or similar compacts. The library compacts would protect the library organization from the vicissitudes affecting a parent higher education compact organization. The separate compact would also avoid questions

affecting ownership of property acquired by the library organization that might arise if it were subordinate to another agency. On the other hand, given the current governmental concern that there may be too many interstate organizations now, the time may not be opportune to ask legislatures to pass another interstate compact for libraries.

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